

# CITY OF SHAKOPEE

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 and social media technologies offer continually evolving opportunities to enhance public outreach, resident and visitor interaction and employee productivity for the City of Shakopee. The City of Shakopee will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communications strategy. Social media web resources administered by City departments may be expanded, modified or discontinued based on City goals, priorities and resources.

### PURPOSE

The City of Shakopee wishes to represent itself, its services and its facilities appropriately and consistently on the Internet. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for creating a consistent overall social media presence that meets the City's established goals.

The City of Shakopee intends to use social media websites as an additional communication channel to help promote its programs, events and services. This technology allows news of an event to spread quickly and is a good forum to facilitate public discussion. The City's official website, located at [www.ci.shakopee.mn.us](http://www.ci.shakopee.mn.us), shall remain the City's primary online medium for communicating information to the public.

### A. GENERAL PROCEDURES

The City of Shakopee has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on its official social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media by individual City departments. This policy applies to any new, as well as pre-existing or proposed, social media networking websites sponsored by City departments.

The City of Shakopee's website ([www.ci.shakopee.mn.us](http://www.ci.shakopee.mn.us)) will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence. Whenever possible information posted to the City's social media websites should also be posted on the City's website. Content posted to City of Shakopee social media sites should regularly contain links directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Shakopee.

1. The best, most appropriate, City of Shakopee uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:
  - a. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
  - b. As marketing/promotional channels that increase the city's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
2. The Communications Coordinator shall be responsible for the City's primary social media pages.

3. Any department requiring consistent and frequent social communications may be asked to start its own site(s) and to provide staff to maintain it. Each department will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites the department may create.
4. Elected officials; appointed members of City Boards, Commissions and Committees; and employees should comply with the guidelines outlined in Sections D and E of this document.
5. City of Shakopee social media sites are subject to State of Minnesota public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content related to City business shall be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public disclosure officer.
6. Minnesota state law and relevant City of Shakopee records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content as reflected in the City's record retention policy. In most cases, content on the City's social media sites is expected to be transitory, incidental or non-vital in nature and therefore shall be retained "until read." However, any content posted that does constitute the official record will be retained according to the City of Shakopee records retention schedule.

## **B. PROCESS FOR CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

1. Individual City departments shall have the discretion to determine the utilization of social media. However, once undertaken, all social media initiatives shall comply with this policy.
2. Departments are strongly encouraged to consult with the Communications Coordinator prior to embarking on the use of new social media tools. This will ensure that the City's array of sanctioned social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number, policies are followed, and the City's communication strategy is appropriately maintained.
3. The appropriate Department Head shall approve the use of social media tools within their department. Staff shall not create a new or significantly alter an existing social media site without the approval of their Department Head.
4. Prior to launching a social media site, the assigned staff person shall register the site and all associated passwords for the account with the City's Communications Coordinator. Any changes to staff responsibilities or passwords must be reported to the Communications Coordinator in a timely manner.

## **C. STANDARDS FOR OPERATING AND MAINTAINING A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

City of Shakopee social media websites and their associated content should focus on significant City interest areas and be organized in a manner that avoids ambiguities and/or conflicting information across the City's various communication mediums, including other City social media websites. Departments' administration and use of City social media websites must comply with applicable laws, regulations and policies, as well as proper business etiquette.

Social media websites are to be consistently branded in order to communicate a clear association with the City, and must contain a City-standard disclaimer. Branding should include, but is not limited to, the inclusion of the City logo, city department information (address, phone number, and hours of operation) and any other aesthetic “look and feel” defined by the Administration Division now or in the future.

The naming and contact conventions used for social media websites should be City of Shakopee-specific and must not contain individual employee names. All approved social media sites will be linked with the City’s official website.

All City sponsored social media sites shall prominently post the Disclaimer and Comments Policy found in Appendix A. In situations where a social media site does not allow for prominent posting of the Disclaimer and Comments Policy, a link to a PDF copy of Appendix A shall be posted instead.

### **Responding to Comments**

In cases where comments are accepted, the staff member responsible for the page **MUST** monitor the site regularly and respond in a timely manner (within 24 hours during the workweek). (Staff can set up automatic e-mail notification when someone posts a comment to a social media site.)

#### *Guidance on When/How to Respond to Comments*

- a. If the person has a question – Respond with information or point them back to the City’s website or other resource. You may ask them to contact you offline when appropriate (when it is a private issue, when the issue is one in which there is little or no interest by others, etc.)
- b. If the person has a complaint – If inaccurate, politely correct inaccuracies. When a general complaint, thank them for sharing feedback and give any other direction that may be needed. If it is regarding a personal matter, reply that you would like to address the issue offline and provide contact information.
- c. If the person leaves a general comment, like “Wow, this is cool” or “Can’t wait,” no response is required.
- d. If the person wants to start debating with a City employee – Take the conversation offline. Do not debate them on the site. It is ok to correct inaccuracies and to provide evidence to support information, but avoid debates.

If in doubt how to respond to a comment, please contact the Communications Coordinator for guidance.

### **Removing Comments**

Comments violating the City’s comment policy (see Appendix A) shall be removed promptly. When a person’s comment is removed, the City will post a reason for removing the post (i.e. “*A comment to this post was removed because it endorsed a political candidate. This is in violation of the City’s comment policy (link to policy)*”). Removed comments should be archived for our records by completing the tracking form found in Appendix B and submitting it to the Communications Coordinator.

### **Correcting Mistakes**

If an employee makes a factual mistake on a City social media site, he/she should correct it as soon as possible. Corrections should be upfront and timely. If modifying an earlier post, make it clear that the post has been corrected. Designate corrections with “Fixed Link” or “Fact Correction” prior to the correction. Do not try to “hide” corrections, as someone may have seen the incorrect information and may be acting upon it.

**Review Procedures**

The Communications Coordinator will have access to all City sponsored social media sites, including rights to edit a site. Each site will be monitored weekly to ensure the site is meeting its intended purpose, that it is being updated regularly, that the content is appropriate and to look for any possible problem that would reflect negatively on the City.

## **D. ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OFFICIALS APPOINTED TO CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

Elected officials and officials appointed to City Boards, Committees and Commissions should comply with the following guidelines when using City of Shakopee social media sites:

1. Official city social media sites shall not be used for campaigning purposes.
2. Comments or links to any content that endorses or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions, including links to an elected official's campaign site shall not be posted. (ALL comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.)
3. Elected officials and members serving on a City board, commission or committee should be mindful of the risks of electronic communication in relation to the Minnesota Data Practices Act and the Open Meeting Law; two-way communication between elected officials or between members of City boards, commissions, committees should be strictly avoided. Adding to a post or comment that would create a quorum of the group you represent should also be strictly avoided. (If the comment or posting requires official review it should be handled before the group during a public meeting.)
4. Social media sites should not be used as a mechanism for conducting official City business other than to informally communicate with the public.
5. When posting or commenting on a City social media site, officials shall reveal their position, be honest, straightforward and respectful, and not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the City.
6. In an effort to be honest, officials must ensure they do not share non-public information related to coworkers, personnel data, medical information, claims or lawsuits, or other non-public or confidential information.
7. Strive to add value to any social media discussion by staying focused on the issue.
8. To help prevent errors and liability issues, officials are encouraged to ask the appropriate staff person or department to post official City documents (i.e., an ordinance recently passed by the City Council), rather than summarizing them from memory.
9. Officials are asked to correct errors or mistakes in a posting or comment as soon as possible. If you modify an earlier post, make it clear the posting has been corrected. Consider designating corrections with "Fixed link" or "Fact correction" prior to the correction.

## **E. CITY EMPLOYEES**

### **1. Staff Members Maintaining City Social Media Sites.**

Staff members assigned the task of maintaining social media sites on behalf of the City must follow this Policy and all relevant sections of the City's Information Technology Policy and Personnel Handbook. Failure to do so will be subject to discipline as outlined in the City's Personnel Handbook.

City social media messages may not be used by any City employee or representative for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues.

City social media messages may not be used to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.

Social media website accounts are considered a City asset and logins to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with City security policies.

A social media website account shall not be used by the City or any City employee or representative to disclose sensitive and/or confidential information without the prior express written approval of the City Attorney's Office.

### **2. Employees' Personal Social Media Pages.**

The line between personal and professional, public and private can be easily blurred in social media. Keep the following guidelines in mind when using a personal social media account:

- a. Personal social media account names by employees should not be tied to the City. Additionally, staff should not use their personal social media accounts to speak on behalf of the City.
- b. City staff members have the right to speak publicly as a private citizen on matters of public concern. However, employees are reminded to use good judgment when commenting on a City social media site or if commenting or posting on a private site regarding a City related issue, policy, etc. If you are identifying yourself as a City employee, your actions reflect upon the City.
- c. When responding to an item on the City's page or on any other page, ask yourself if you or your department would be embarrassed to see the comment appear in the news. If so, don't post it.
- d. Employees with personal social media accounts never have the right to post non-public and confidential information such as information related to co-workers, personnel data, medical information, and claims or lawsuits against the City.
- e. Video or pictures obtained by employees on duty are the property of the City. Employees shall not post those pictures or videos on social media sites without approval from the employees' department head or the City Administrator.

**F. EXCEPTIONS/CHANGE**

This policy supersedes all previous policies covering the same or similar topics. Any exception to this policy may be granted only by the City Administrator. This policy may be reviewed and changed at any time.

## APPENDIX A

### **DISCLAIMER & COMMENT POLICY (to be prominently posted on every social media page)**

The purpose of this and other City sponsored social media sites is to communicate between the City, its individual departments and members of the public. We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to change, modify, add or delete comments or posts, photos and videos in accordance with this policy.

In general, it is the City's intent to not allow posts to be initiated by users on its social media pages. However, in the instances where comments are allowed, the City will remove comments that:

1. Contain obscenities;
2. Demean specific individuals or groups of people;
3. Are libelous/slanderous;
4. Contain factual inaccuracies;
5. Qualify as SPAM;
6. Are not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
7. Express support for or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
8. Contain sexual content or links to sexual content;
9. Solicit commerce;
10. Conduct or encourage illegal activity;
11. Compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
12. Violate a legal ownership interest of any other party.

Additionally, ALL comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.

The City of Shakopee has the right to remove a comment from and/or block a user who is not using their legal name or otherwise appropriately identifying themselves.

The City of Shakopee has the right to reproduce any pictures or videos posted to this site in any of its publications or websites or any other media outlets. The City of Shakopee has the right to quote any comments or suggestions left by users.

The views, postings, positions or opinions expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Shakopee.

The City of Shakopee does not use its social media sites to promote, become a "friend" of or "fan" of, or link to individuals or private sector businesses.

#### **Advertising**

The City of Shakopee does not endorse any product, service, company or organization advertising on its social media pages. The ads that appear on social media pages are sold, posted and maintained by those social media sites.

#### **Privacy policy**

Please note that the City of Shakopee does not share information gathered through its social media sites with

third parties for promotional purposes. However, any information you provide to the City is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public on request.

APPENDIX B

REMOVED COMMENTS TRACKING FORM

All comments removed from a City sponsored social media site should be documented with this form. When completed, please deliver or email to Lori Cram, Communications Coordinator, at [lcram@ci.shakopee.mn.us](mailto:lcram@ci.shakopee.mn.us).

1. City of Shakopee social media site affected: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of original post: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Screen name of poster: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Entire comment that was removed (attach separate page if more room is needed):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Reason for removal of comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Date comment was removed and explanation for removal was posted to social media site:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Comment removed from City of Shakopee social media site by: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Other pertinent information (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date this report was received by the Communications Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

This form will be retained by the Communications Coordinator for a period of 1 year.

## APPENDIX C

### DEFINITIONS

**Social Media Websites** - Social media websites focus on creating and fostering online social communities for a specific purpose and connect users from varying locations and interest areas. Social media websites can offer many different ways for users to interface such as instant messaging, blogging and commenting, online forums, status updates (microblogging), website link sharing, video conferencing, sharing pictures and videos, etc. Examples include Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, etc.

**Blog** - (an abbreviated term for “Web Log”) is a website where a blog author can post information on a specific topic targeted to a specific audience. A blog, if commenting is enabled, allows registered members of the public (called blog commenters) to post comments about posts by the blog author.

**Social Networking** – Social networking websites offer a way for registered users to communicate with each other on the Internet. They usually offer many ways to connect to other registered users such as status updates (microblogging), instant messaging, blogs, polls, photo sharing, video sharing, etc.

**Web 2.0** - Commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site gives its users the free choice to interact or collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them.